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September 17, 2021

VIA ECF

Hon. Margo K. Brodie
Chief United States District Judge
United States District Court, EDNY
225 Cadman Plaza East
Brooklyn, New York 11201

Re: United States v. Raza Sikandar
Indictment # 20 CR 582 (MKB)

Dear Chief Judge Brodie;

I write to respectfully request that the Court permit me to withdraw as counsel to Mr. Sikandar. I have just learned that his family has hired two outside law firms, one in Virginia and one here in New York, to “advise” the defendant of his options, and whether to plead guilty or go to trial. Specifically, Mr. Sikandar advised me that his family paid the law firm of John Meringolo, Esq., the sum of \$25,000 to provide him with advice and an “analysis” of his options. Mr. Meringolo’s firm has not filed a notice of appearance, nor has the Virginia firm.

It is clear to me that Mr. Sikandar does not have confidence in me, since he has hired what I can only term “shadow counsel” to advise him. More significantly, though, the fact that his family has paid a large sum to other counsel indicates that they are willing to fund his defense and have done so; he is therefore not entitled to or eligible for CJA counsel.

I respectfully request that the Court direct the defendant to have his retained counsel appear for him, and relieve me as CJA counsel.

Thank you for your courtesy and consideration.

Respectfully yours,

/s/ JOHN S. WALLENSTEIN

JOHN S. WALLENSTEIN

JSW/hs

cc: AUSA Andrew Wenzel (by ECF)
Raza Sikandar (by mail)